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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/944,157	09/04/2001	Stefan Reh	076326-0194	9080

7590 09/17/2002

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EXAMINER

FLORES SANCHEZ, OMAR

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3724

DATE MAILED: 09/17/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/944,157

Applicant(s)

REH ET AL.

Examiner

Omar Flores-Sánchez

Art Unit

3724

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 10-14 and 17-22 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9, 15 and 16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____.
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6. 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 10-14, 17-21 and 22 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention and nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in Paper No. 8.
2. Applicant's election with traverse of Group I and Species I in Paper No. 8 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that the method step of claim 1 could not be practiced by hand. This is not found persuasive because the method of forming a weakening area in airbag cover could be practiced by hand.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-4, 7-8 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Towler et al. (foreign patent no. 2, 205, 284).

Towler discloses a method of forming a weakening area in airbag cover comprising the set of: providing a cutting support Fig. 4A; providing a cutter; placing the airbag with the

decorative facing down on the support Fig. 4; cutting a tear line of a predetermined pattern Fig. 4A; applying a predetermined force to the area of the cover and maintaining the cover against the support with a vacuum Fig. 4A.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 5-6 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tower et al. and Yamasaki et al.

Tower discloses the method of forming a weakening area in airbag cover substantially as claimed except for an oscillating cutter/blade. However, Yamasaki teaches the use of an oscillating cutter/blade 22 for the purpose of forming the recess portion in the thermoplastic elastomer material. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Tower's cutter by providing the oscillating cutter/blade as taught by Yamasaki in order to cut the support layer made of thermoplastic elastomer material.

7. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tower et al. in view of foreign patent no. DE 4424686 A1.

Tower discloses the method of forming a weakening area in airbag cover substantially as claimed except for an end having a semicircular shape. However,

foreign patent '686 teaches the use of an end having a semicircular shape 18, 20 for the purpose of preventing the tearing action which occurs along the breaking line from being extended beyond the end of the breaking line. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Tower's device by providing the end having a semicircular shape as taught by foreign patent '686 in order to prevent the tearing action which occurs along the breaking line from being extended beyond the end of the breaking line.

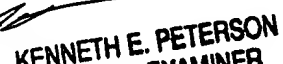
Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Ward, Slobodkin, Takada and Jung are cited to show related device.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Omar Flores-Sánchez whose telephone number is 703-308-0167. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Thursday between 8am and 5pm. If attempts to reach the examiner are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Allan Shoap can be reached on 703-308-1082.

In lieu of mailing, it is encouraged that all formal responses be faxed to 703-872-9302. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1148.

ofs
September 11, 2002


KENNETH E. PETERSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER